

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 14121

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), CH, GW, TW
SUBJECT: SECRETARY VANCE'S PEKING VISIT

REFS: (A) SECTO 9046; (B) BONN 13704; (C) STATE 198748

1. WE GAVE THE FONOFF (WEGNER, ACTING DIRECTOR OF OFFICE FOR EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS) A NON-PAPER BASED ON REFTEL A ON AUGUST 26. AFTER READING IT THROUGH, WEGNER SAID THE TIMELINESS AND COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE INFORMATION WAS MOST APPRECIATED. HE NOTED THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE "NOTHING SURPRISING" BUT OFFERED THE PERSONAL VIEW THAT THE US SEEMED TO BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN DEALING WITH PEKING, ADDING THAT THIS WAS NOT THE TIME FOR SOMETHING DRASTIC. (EMBOFF REMINDED WEGNER THAT NOTHING SURPRISING HAD BEEN PROMISED FOR THE VISIT AND RECALLED POINTS REFTEL C.)

2. WEGNER'S READING OF THE NON-PAPER LEFT HIM UNCLEAR ABOUT ONE POINT, HOWEVER. IF REFERENCE TO DIFFERENCES ABOUT DETENTE AND WEST'S STRENGTH AND RESOLVE (PARA 3) REFERS TO US-SOVIET RELATIONS THEN, HE SAID, EVERYTHING WAS QUITE CLEAR. IF, HOWEVER, DETENTE WERE GIVEN SPECIAL CHINESE CONTEXT, THEN THE FRG WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING MORE INFORMATION IF AVAILABLE.

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3. WEGNER OBSERVED THAT FRG PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE VANCE MISSION HAD NOT BEEN VERY FAVORABLE. IMPLICIT IN ANY CRITICISM, HE SAID, WAS DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE LACK OF CONCRETE RESULTS. EVEN THOUGH THE US HAD NEVER PROMISED ANY, SOME JOURNALISTS HAD CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT SOMETHING MOST NEWSWORTHY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

HE CONTINUED THAT IT SEEMED TO BE A COMMON OPINION IN EUROPE AND IN ASIA (WHERE HE HAD TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY LAST YEAR) THAT THE US HAD COME SO FAR IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE PRC SINCE 1972 THAT ALL THAT REMAINED WAS "ONE TINY STEP" OF BREAKING TIES WITH TAIWAN. THIS STEP, HE REALIZED, DID NOT APPEAR SO SMALL WHEN VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE US POLITICAL SCENE. HOWEVER, THIS DIFFERENCE SEEMED TO BE LOST ON MANY GERMAN JOURNALISTS.

4. COMMENT: SOME OF THE PRESS REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HAS INDEED BEEN CRITICAL. EMBASSY DAILY PRESS REVIEW OF AUGUST 25 AND 26 PROVIDES GOOD SAMPLING OF PRESS COMMENTARY. WEGNER IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN ATTRIBUTING THIS CRITICAL COMMENTARY TO UNREALISTIC INITIAL EXPECTATIONS.

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